

Conference Management Plan

This Plan documents the Conference Management Plan and Procedures to comply with OMB memo M-12-12 conference requirements, DOE's Daniel Poneman's Memo dated December 6, 2012, the DOE's Office of the General Counsel's Guidance on Conducting and Participating in Conferences, and as may be required under federal law and/or with Management and Operations requirements under the Laboratory's DOE contract, DE-AC02-07CH11358.

1.0 APPROVAL RECORD

- Reviewed by: Document Control Coordinator (Amy Tehan)
- Approved by: Chief Operations Officer (Mark Murphy)
- Approved by: Associate Lab Director for Sponsored Research (Debra Covey)
- Approved by: Assistant Director for Scientific Planning (Cynthia Jenks)
- Approved by: Legal Counsel (Adwin Hesseltine)
- Approved by: Chief Research Officer (Duane Johnson)
- Approved by: Deputy Director (Tom Lograsso)
- Approved by: Director (Adam Schwartz)
- Reviewed by: Ames Site Office Manager (Cynthia Baebler)

The official approval record for this document is maintained in the Training & Records Management Office, 151 TASF.

2.0 REVISION/REVIEW INFORMATION

This is the update and release of this plan. Future revision descriptions for this document will be made available from and maintained by the author.

3.0 POLICY

It is the policy of the Ames Laboratory to adhere to conference planning and regulations as DOE orders and policies stipulate.

OMB memo M-12-12 contains the requirements for conference management by the laboratories. Different requirements exist for conferences sponsored by laboratories and conferences attended by laboratory staff. The memo establishes expectations for laboratory management to control and document the number of employees attending a specific conference and minimize the costs by contractor employees at all conferences. It clarifies the requirements for funding conferences in compliance with existing laws and regulations and it ensures that contractors are exercising care with respect to the use of tax payer's dollars.

This plan formalizes a process that was put in place at Ames Laboratory to comply with conference management guidelines which required an approval process for all conference sponsorships and attendance. A tiered approach was established by DOE that combined DOE complex wide totals and federal approvals for conference sponsorship and attendance. Generally the approvals required from DOE involve conference attendance where DOE funds are used to sponsor attendees, participants, and presenters. The approval process may take close to 4 months while the Laboratory list of attendees may not be settled until a few weeks

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prior to the conference. The plan will advise administrative personnel on aspects to consider in completing conference requests.

Compliance with this plan is the responsibility of each Ames Laboratory employee.

4.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Ames Laboratory collaborates and interacts with organizations worldwide. Conference attendance by Ames Laboratory staff is very important in fulfilling the mission of the Laboratory. Conferences are an efficient forum to disseminate research results and establish contacts for collaborative work. Conferences and meetings are also a great forum to share best practices to keep the operations of the Laboratory as cost effective as possible. With limited resources always a concern, Laboratory management has to weigh the benefits of conference participation to the related cost. The Laboratory's major thrust is fundamental research conducted to advance general knowledge, practical applications can or may be developed from this research and disseminated during conferences and workshops.

The purpose of this plan is to outline the roles and responsibilities of Laboratory employees in regards to participation in local, national, and international conferences.

The policies and procedures outlined in this plan are the responsibility of all research and support staff that may be affected by the information contained within the Laboratory's documentation.

5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. Director and Deputy Director

Both the Director and Deputy Director are responsible for:

- The implementation and oversight of all approval requests related to all Laboratory-sponsored domestic and international conferences which require employees to be on official travel to attend, participate, or present.
- Ensuring that contractor conferences are being held to support the Laboratory's purpose and conform to procedural requirements of OMB memo M-12-12 and conference definitions outlined in Poneman memo D-6-12.
- Notification to Laboratory staff of the Conference Management Plan and guidance.

5.2. Chief Operations Officer

The Chief Operations Officer is responsible for:

- Conference management planning and administration of the program at the Laboratory.
- Approval/Disapproval of all initial conference hosting or co-hosting requests that fall within his/her delegated authority.
- Recommendations for approval of any request that exceeds delegated authority for conference attendance and sponsorship requests to conferences below \$100,000 DOE complex-wide.
- Designating a primary and/or alternate organizational point of contact (OPOC) and ensure the designated employee(s) enters the information requested; estimated costs, estimated attendees, contractor sponsored conferences

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details, provisions for food, and cost saving strategies implement for each conference on the iPortal DOE Conference Management Tool (CMT).

5.2.1 *Conference Management Organizational Point of Contact (OPOC)*

The OPOC is responsible for:

- Working with the Program Director/Manager and Administrative Assistants to guide staff through the process of submitting proper forms and notices for conference sponsorship and/or attendance.
- Upon notification of researchers/staff attending a workshop with an approaching lock date, the OPOC may contact the various Laboratory programs to attain an estimated list of attendees for the specified conference and consolidate this information into a Laboratory wide view of the conference.
- Submitting conference information into DOE Conference Management Tool (CMT) as necessary.
- Notifying and documenting conference approvals for disclosure to departments/divisions and the travel office.
- Coordinate with the Foreign Travel Management System POC on all foreign conferences.
- Coordinate with the DOE Assistant Secretary of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs and the DOE Director of Public Affairs where conference decisions may have congressional, intergovernmental, press, or public affairs implications or effects.
- Ensuring information required in the conference request, including estimated costs, cost saving strategies, travel justifications, about contractor sponsored conferences, is entered in the DOE's Conference Management Tool (CMT).
- Contacting and gaining written (email) approval from the Ames Site Office on all events that qualify as exempt from CMT documentation requirements utilizing the "Submitting an Exemption Request" document and supporting information to Ames Site Office.
- Negotiation for information and additional "slots" with approved labs for Ames Laboratory travelers after conference approval dates.
- DOE conference call updates and implementation of new requests and standards as communicated within teleconference meetings.

5.2.2 *Actual Expense Reporting*

The Expense Reporter is responsible for:

- Recording and documenting all expenses associated with a conference traveler as needed for DOE reporting requirements.
- Confirming that conference travelers do not exceed estimated amounts or if exceed estimates by reasonable amount due to unforeseen event.

5.3. **Division Director (DD)/Institute Director (ID)/Program Director (PD)/Department Manager (DM) or Administrative Assistant (AA)**

The DD/ID/PD/DM/AA is responsible for:

- Ensuring that proposed conferences to be hosted by Ames Laboratory do not duplicate conferences presented by others that involve DOE funds and ensuring that contractor-sponsored conferences do not duplicate private-sector

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activities, such as trade shows and similar events.

- Ensuring that conferences are held at locations accessible to disabled individuals and that such individuals are provided reasonable accommodations to engage in conference activities.
- Ensures that the OPOC receives all necessary information in the conference request notification.

5.4. Laboratory Staff

Laboratory staff who attend conferences are reminded that they are stewards of taxpayer dollars and should ensure the Laboratory funds are used solely for purposes that are appropriate, cost-effective, and important to the core mission of the Laboratory. Attendees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates the professionalism of Ames Laboratory at all times and to maintain the highest levels of ethics and responsibility.

- Report all planned conference travel to their AA or the Conference OPOC.
- Aggressively seek to reduce costs.
- Requests for conference approval must flag any aspects of the request, such as the venue, which might raise questions and provide an explanation for the choice.
- Submission of supporting information and documentation for all conferences that may be deemed exempt from Conference Management. This documentation is submitted to Ames Site Office for confirmation and approval of exemption.
- No costs associated with conference hosting or conference attendance shall be incurred until the appropriate approval (local and/or HQ) is received and communicated to the Laboratory and its divisions. The Purchasing Department is aware and will not make arrangements to a conference until approval has been received and documented by the Conference OPOC.

6.0. EXCLUSIONS

6.1. DOE Conference Management Approval is not required for the following:

Ames Site Office will give the final approval as to if an exemption is applicable to a defined event for the following reasons (as listed in Poneman Memo D-6-12):

- Exemption A – Statutory oversight functions that include activities such as investigations, inspections, audits, or non-conference planning site visits..
- Exemption B – DOE and contractor employees traveling to Federal sites where work for DOE is being performed to discuss the status of that work, classified as a meeting. This exemption would include activities such as meetings that take place in an organization's regular course of business, don't exhibit formal conference elements, and take place in a Federal facility.
- Exemption C – Bi-lateral and multi-lateral international cooperation engagements that do not exhibit elements of a formal conference and are focused on diplomatic relations.
- Exemption D – Formal, structured training programs (including seminars specifically held for training purposes) that have specific objectives identified to

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improve certain knowledge, skills, and abilities. This exemption would include activities such as regular courses of instruction or training seminars at the national Training Center, and the HAMMER training facility at Hanford, and regular courses of instruction or training seminars conducted by the Office of Management for Acquisition Workforce related to the core activities of the Department.

- Exemption E – Classroom training available through Federal and commercial sources as required as part of a certification program required for the performance of an employee’s position which does not exhibit elements of a formal conference as outlined.
- Exemption F - Advisory Committee meetings, Solicitation/Funding Opportunity Announcement Review Board meetings, peer review/objective review panel meetings, evaluation panel/board meetings, and program kick-off and review meeting (including those grants and contracts).
- NOTE: Costs associated with shortened or extended travel due to an unforeseen event will be omitted from CMT documentation (i.e. illness or weather conditions causing delays, etc.). Such costs are considered a cost of doing business and not part of the cost of the conference.

7.0 PREREQUISITE ACTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

7.1. Definitions or Vocabulary

The Conference Management Tool (CMT): A working database of information documenting all conference activities within the DOE complex. The CMT is utilized to track and approve all conference activities that DOE funds are used to sponsor travelers to attend, participate, and present research information during conferences. The CMT allows for approval packages of DOE complex-wide conferences over \$100K to go for the Deputy Secretary’s signature approval and over \$500K to go to the Secretary of Energy for signature approval. The CMT is housed in the government sponsored iPortal system, <https://iportal.doe.gov>.

Conference: A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel, and is not exempt under Section 6 of the Conference Management Plan. The term “conference” also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 C.F.R 410.404. Other common terms used include conventions, expositions, symposiums, seminars, workshops, or exhibitions. Conferences typically involve topical matters of interest to, and the participation of, multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participations. Indicia of a formal conference often include but are not limited to registration, registration fees, a published substantive agenda, and scheduled speakers, or discussion panels. Individual events may qualify as conferences without meeting all the indicia listed above, but will generally meet some of them. Please note some training events may qualify as conferences for the purposes of this guidance, particularly if they take place in a hotel or conference center.

Foreign Conference: A conference or event that takes place in a foreign location that FTMS approval will be required in addition to the CMT documentation, notification, and approval.

Foreign Travel Management System (FTMS): A DOE-sponsored database that tracks and documents an approval process for all foreign travel utilizing DOE funding, DOE information, or an individual with certain security clearances. <https://ftms.doe.gov/>

Meeting: Events necessary to carry out statutory oversight functions; to consider internal agency business held in a Federal facility; international cooperation engagements focused on diplomatic relations; advisory committee, review panels, evaluation panel/boards, program kick-off and review meetings. The Ames Site Office (AMSO) must provide their approval for a meeting to be considered exempt.

Training: Formal classroom training held at a Federal facility or required as part of a certification program for the performance of an employee's position.

7.2. Acronyms

AA – Administrative Assistant

AMSO – Ames Site Office, Chicago

CMT – Conference Management Tool

COO - Chief Operations Officer

DD – Division Director

DM – Division Manager

DOE - Department of Energy

FTMS – Foreign Travel Management System

HQ – Department of Energy headquarters

ID – Institute Director

ISU - Iowa State University

OPOC - Organizational Point of Contact

PD – Program Director(s)

8.0 PROGRAM/POLICY/PROCEDURE INFORMATION

DOE Policy regarding reimbursement of conference registration fees, allowable conference (and related) costs, and conference funding is as follows:

8.1. DOE will reimburse Ames Laboratory for approved conference costs only if the principal purpose of the conference is to disseminate trade, business, professional, or technical information or to stimulate production per contract requirements.

8.2. If Ames Laboratory sponsors a conference, it may charge attendees (including DOE, DOE contractor employees, and non-DOE attendees) a registration fee if the conference has been initiated by the contractor and is not being conducted under a task

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order or other specific contractual requirement or request from DOE and provided that DOE is not statutorily or legally mandated to conduct the conference and provided that attendance at the conference is not a requirement for the receipt of any benefit or service from DOE. The Laboratory can collect the fee to offset the conference costs. The fee may not be used for any type of unallowable cost, such as entertainment or alcoholic beverages, as outlined in M&O Contract Clause H.5 and/or DEAR 970.5232-2. DOE may not be a co-sponsor of such a conference.

8.3. DOE will not reimburse the Laboratory for the cost of entertainment or alcoholic beverages, regardless of how the cost is classified; for example, DOE will not reimburse an entertainment cost included in a conference fee unless the cost is non-separable.

8.4. DOE will reimburse the Laboratory for the cost of meals and refreshments only if:

- The meals and refreshments are incidental to the conference.
- Attendance at the meals and when refreshments are served is important for the attendee's full participation in the conference.
- The meals and refreshments are part of a formal conference that also includes substantial functions occurring separately from when the food is served.

8.5. If a non-Government organization sponsors a conference and a single, mandatory, non-separable registration fee is charged for both attendance and meals or an evening social event, the cost of the full registration fee is allowable.

8.6. Employees must reduce claims for per diem if meals are included in a registration fee. Although per diem is an allowable cost under DOE contracts, DOE will not reimburse the Laboratory for any additional costs for employee meals.

8.7. A DOE contractor may charge a separate voluntary fee to attendees to cover such items as meals or entertainment. This fee will not be reimbursed by DOE. However, when the employee pays this voluntary fee, he/she is not required to reduce his/her per diem.

8.8. Hosting or Co-Hosting a Conference

When managing contractor-sponsored or co-sponsored conferences, contractors must meet the following requirements:

- Keep expenditures and attendance at conferences to the minimum necessary to accomplish program objectives.
- Minimize the number and cost of exhibits/booths at all conferences and where practical, use corporate-type exhibits/booths that can be shared by DOE and DOE contractor organizations.
- Justify a recurring conference (do not assume that an annual conference must

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be held merely because it has been held previously).

- Select sites that minimize conference administrative costs and attendees' travel and per diem costs and maximize the use of Government-owned or Government-provided facilities.
- Select sites only after evaluating cost differences of at least three prospective locations unless there is a specific advantage to the Government, which must be documented in writing.
- In the selection process, identify opportunities to save costs in selecting a particular conference site or in scheduling the conference (e.g., to obtain off-season rates).
- Maintain written documentation of the alternatives considered and the selection rationale used as outlined in the DOE's Office of General Counsel's Guidance on Conducting and Participating in Conferences. Avoid selecting resort or recreational sites unless true cost savings will result.
- Make binding conference arrangements only after obtaining the approvals required by this plan.
- Conferences sponsored by Ames Laboratory must not include entertainment events or meals that are being paid for by the Laboratory which will result in Federal employees violating the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2635).
- Avoid commercial conference facilities for conferences involving sensitive information.
- Avoid holding conferences at non-DOE sites that do not meet the fire protection requirements of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-391, as amended). This requirement may be waived by the Secretary of Energy.
- Promote the event in conference with (1) Q&A #21 of the DOE's Office of the General Counsels' Guidance on Conducting and Participating in Conferences, and 10 CFR § 1002, with regard to using the DOE seal and logo, and DOE web page linking policy, and (ii) Executive Order 13589 with regard to purchasing promotional items.

8.8.1 *Attending a Conference*

In determining which and how many employees to send to a conference that requires employee travel, consideration will be given to the recommendation of the Program Director/Manager on the request documentation and to the consolidated conference documentation prepared by the Conference Management OPOC.

8.8.2 In deciding whether employees should participate in a conference sponsored by a private interest, Program Directors/Managers must consider the following before submitting to the Conference POC.

Determine that participation in the conference is in the best interest of the Laboratory, based upon:

- The relevance of the event
- The potential benefit
- The need to get DOE related information out to the attendees and whether the particular conference is an effective means to do that
- The number of DOE or DOE contractor employees who are either presenting, participants or expected attendees
- The total costs for DOE and DOE contractor attendees, participants, and presenters
- The location of the event
- The potential for any adverse perception associated with DOE participation
- Whether DOE's interests would be better served by the direct sponsorship of a conference

8.8.3 The Laboratory's POC and DDs/IDs/PDs/DMs/AAs will estimate conference attendance for each department/division. In cases where attendees from multiple programs are involved each department/division will notify the POC of their individual department's estimates. The DDs/IDs/PDs/DMs/AAs of the involved programs will actively seek to provide the needed information to POC.

- Conference estimates that require Ames Site Office (AMSO) exemption requests or HQ approvals MUST be submitted at least 90 days in advance of early registration to accommodate CMT documentation requirements.
- Conference estimates & submission information must be maintained by the Conference Management POC for a minimum of 6 years.

9.0 Delegation of Authority

The Ames Site Office has delegated authority to the Ames Laboratory Director for the following thresholds.

- Conference hosting where DOE costs are less than \$100,000.

The Director, when absent from the Laboratory, delegates conference hosting/co-hosting approval authority to the Deputy Director.

10.0 Revision Requirement

Minor revisions to packets approved by AMSO or DOE may be approved locally. Revisions requiring AMSO or DOE approval include the following actions:

- If there is a significant increase in individuals that exceed original estimates, or
- If the approved conference funding fees increase and the new level exceeds the delegated approved amounts

11.0 Strategic Scientific Partnerships, Royalty Funds or Director's Discretionary Funds

Conference travel supported by Strategic Scientific Partnerships (formerly Work for Others), is

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not subject to this Conference Management Plan. Ames Laboratory royalty funds may be used to support conference sponsorship or conference attendance as long as the Royalty Use Plan includes these items as potential expenditures. Costs have to be allowable in accordance with the terms of the contract. Approval by DOE CMT is not required if Royalty Funds are used to support conference travel. Director's Discretionary Funds are not considered DOE funds and, therefore, are not subject to this Plan.

12.0. Attachments

Attachment 1. Process Flowchart

Attachment 2. Manual for entering information into the DOE CMT

Attachment 3. Information checklist for Divisions/Departments to submit information for conference management.

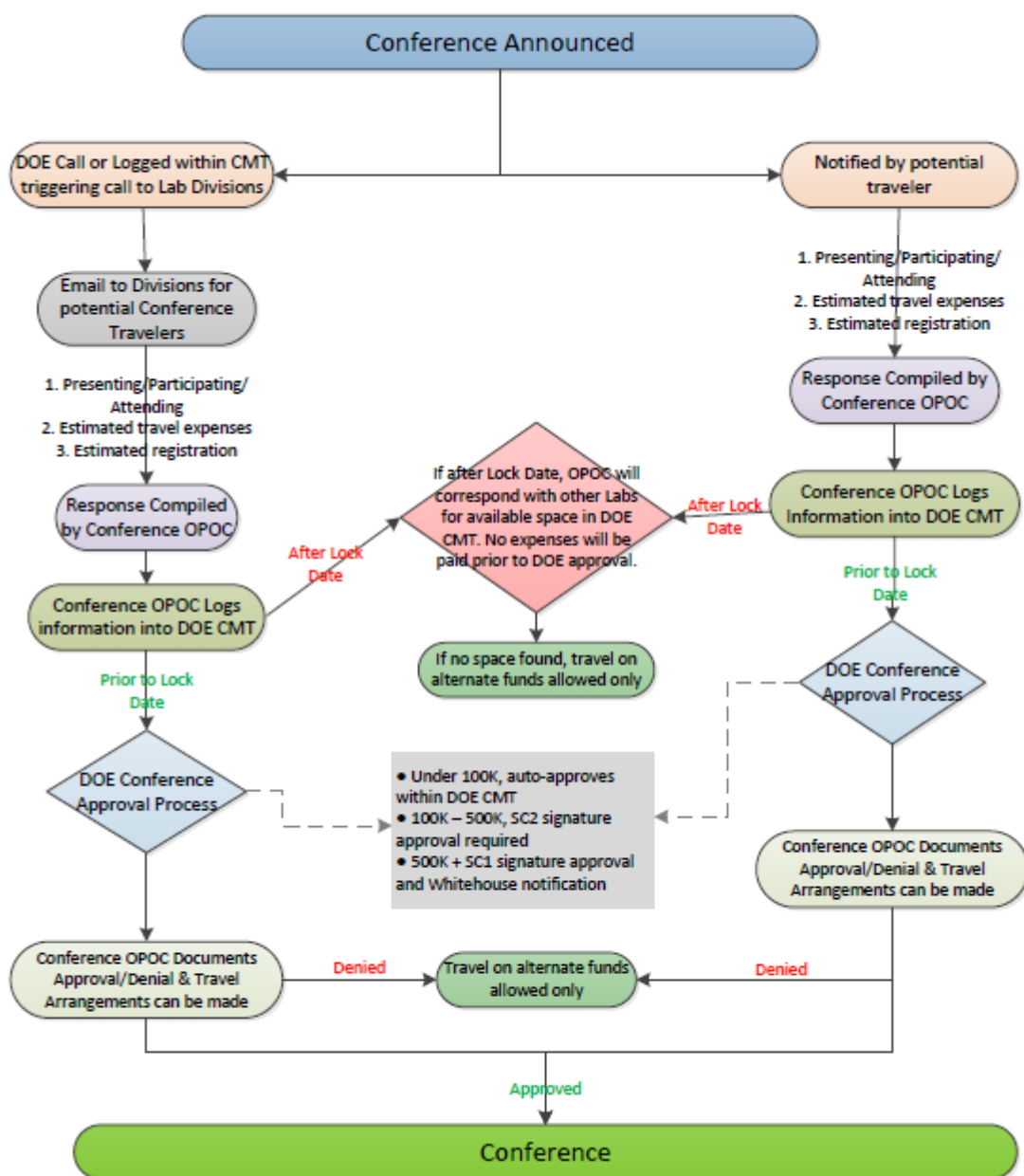
Attachment 4. OMB memo May 2012.

Attachment 5. Poneman memo December 6, 2012.

Attachment 6. DOE's Office of the General Counsel's Guidance on Conducting and Participating in Conferences, reissued July 5, 2012

Attachment 7. Submitting an Exemption Request

Attachment 1

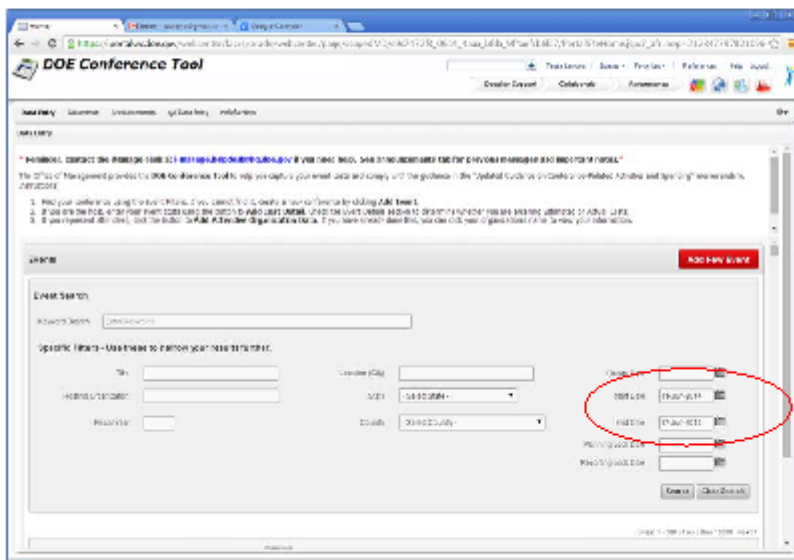


Attachment 2

Procedures for entering/approving a conference under \$100K

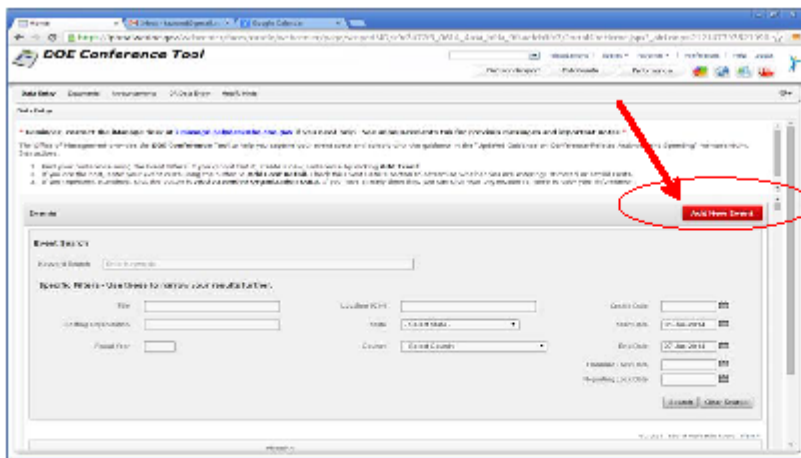
When notified by a division of potential travel (presenting, participating, attending) to an event, enter information into the FY14 Conferences spreadsheet & review event website for possible exemption to reporting requirements. If there is a possible exemption, email info to AMSO with justification for exemption according to the Dec 2012 Conference Mgmt Memo. If exempt, document on FY14 Conferences spreadsheet, otherwise, update into DOE CMT (see below).

Run date search in DOE Conference Mgmt Tool (CMT) in iPortal. Pad the date of the event by 2-3 days to the start & end to gain a full view of conferences taking part in the specified timespan. Use State/Country as additional filter in search.



The screenshot shows the 'DOE Conference Tool' web application. The 'Event Search' section is active, with fields for 'Event Search', 'Title', 'Location (City)', 'Start Date', 'End Date', 'Reporting Agency', and 'Country'. A red circle highlights the 'Start Date' and 'End Date' fields, which are set to '10/15/14' and '11/01/14' respectively. The 'Add New Event' button is visible in the top right corner.

If event is not listed, enter event by utilizing the "Add New Event" feature, upper right of screen.



The screenshot shows the 'DOE Conference Tool' web application. The 'Add New Event' button is highlighted with a red circle and an arrow pointing to it. The 'Event Search' section is also visible, with fields for 'Event Search', 'Title', 'Location (City)', 'Start Date', 'End Date', 'Reporting Agency', and 'Country'.

Attachment 3

Conference Mgmt Check-List

Conference Travel Key Points:

Date: 12 / 01 / 2013

****At Least 75 days prior to conference start date****

1. Is there a conference that the Traveler is planning to attend using DOE funds?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

If "Yes" complete conference notification.

(This form can be completed or information can be emailed to OPOC)

Conference Name	John Henry
Conference Date(s)	June 1 - 5, 2013
Conference Location	Baltimore, MD
Conference Website (if available)	www.google.com
Traveler's Name	John Smith
Registration Amount	750
Travel Estimate Amount	2250
Justification (Presenting, poster, et	Presenting

If questions:

Conference OPOC: Tessa Lemons 4-2618 tlemons@ameslab.gov

Attachment 4



The Deputy Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

May 21, 2012


MEMORANDUM FOR DAVID B. SANDALOW
ACTING UNDER SECRETARY OF ENERGY

THOMAS P. D'AGOSTINO
UNDER SECRETARY FOR NUCLEAR SECURITY

W.F. BRINKMAN
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SCIENCE

HEADS OF DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS

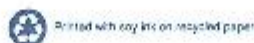
NATIONAL LABORATORY DIRECTORS

FROM: DANIEL B. PONEMAN 
SUBJECT: Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has released new policy guidance (attached) on travel, conference expenditures, real estate and fleet management. Under the leadership of the Associate Deputy Secretary, the Department will implement these new requirements collaboratively with your organizations.

Earlier this fiscal year, you certified that your organizations, including any M&O contractors, were following the applicable regulations and policies in managing your conference-related activities and expenses, as required by OMB Memorandum 11-35. The new guidance from OMB expands upon that requirement. Effective immediately, planned spending for any upcoming conferences that are sponsored or hosted by DOE (or by other Federal or non-Federal entities, including the National Laboratories and other facility site management contractors) where our net conference expenses DOE will exceed \$100,000, must be reviewed by my office. Until those reviews are completed, you must suspend incurring obligations for conferences to which we have not yet committed. Whether the Department has committed to a conference will be decided on a case-by-case basis, looking at the totality of the circumstances around the proposed conference (i.e., the date, whether speakers have accepted invitations, whether a deposit has been paid on the facility, whether vendors have been confirmed, whether the organization has begun booking travel expenses, etc.).

To expedite this process, please provide a list of any conferences that are currently planned where the net conference expenses will exceed \$100,000. Please attach this list to a Memorandum to me indicating your approval for these events, that they are in the



Attachment 5



The Deputy Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

December 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR DAVID B. SANDLOW
ACTING UNDER SECRETARY OF ENERGY

THOMAS P. D'AGOSTINO
UNDER SECRETARY FOR NUCLEAR SECURITY

W.F. BRINKMAN
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SCIENCE

HEADS OF ALL DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS

FIELD SITE MANAGERS

LABORATORY DIRECTORS

FROM: DANIEL B. PONEMAN 
SUBJECT: Updated Guidance on Conference-Related Activities and Spending

On May 11, 2012, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memorandum to all agencies that contained steps to further improve operations, increase efficiency, and promote cost consciousness. One component of that memorandum outlined a new set of policies and practices for conference stewardship, hosting, and attendance to ensure that Federal funds are used appropriately on these activities. At the Department of Energy (DOE), we have been working over the last several months to put in place a process by which we can further improve our stewardship of taxpayer dollars in this area and implement OMB's direction. The updated guidance and requirements contained in this memorandum are a result of improved processes that have been developed, including the creation of a Conference Management Database to assist in the execution of this direction regarding conference spending. All prior memoranda on this topic, other than the GC Guidance on Conferences, are hereby cancelled, including the Deputy Secretary memoranda dated May 21, 2012 and July 6, 2012.

It is important that this updated guidance on conference-related activities and spending is disseminated to all Department employees and contractors. This memorandum is being sent via a DOE-wide DOECAST. In addition, each Head of Contracting Activity must communicate these requirements with appropriate instructions to all Contracting

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Attachment 6

GC GUIDANCE ON CONDUCTING AND PARTICIPATING IN CONFERENCES (REISSUED 7-5-12)

The Department of Energy's (DOE) participation in conferences presents a unique opportunity to engage the general public and other entities, public and private, in the accomplishment of our mission. But it can also raise legal issues regarding the appropriate use of government funds, the receipt of gifts in the form of meals and the like, the endorsement of private activities by government officials, and the implication that some organizations have a special relationship with the Department. We are modifying the previous GC Guidance that was issued regarding conferences to address these important issues in light of recent guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that was issued on May 11, 2012. OMB has directed new scrutiny of conference activities, spending limits, and instituted a requirement for public reporting. Other guidance dealing with non-legal aspects of the OMB guidance, including the approval process and the reporting requirements will be addressed in other DOE documents.

In an effort to make this Guidance simple, we have presented the rules for both participating in and conducting a conference in question and answer format. As with any GC Guidance, it cannot answer every question that may arise. Anyone with more detailed questions should contact the Office of the Assistant General Counsel for General Law at (202) 586-1522.

This guidance applies to conferences in which DOE participates, as specified in Q3 below.

Q1. What rules govern how DOE may participate in conferences?

A1. This document lists the basic requirements applicable to DOE hosted, co-hosted, and funded conferences, as well as DOE employee participation in non-DOE hosted conferences. DOE contractor participation in hosted or co-hosted conferences is governed by the terms of a particular contract, including any relevant Contractor Requirements Document (CRD) and the applicable cost principles. However, see Q6 and Q30 with regard to including and reporting contractor expenses associated with conferences.

Conference Planning is addressed in 41 C.F.R. Part 301-74. When planning a conference, you must:

- consider alternatives to a conference (e.g. teleconferencing);
- exercise strict fiscal responsibility to minimize all costs, direct and indirect, associated with the conference;
- minimize the number of federal employees authorized to attend the conference to reflect the minimum necessary to achieve the Department's objectives;
- maximize the use of Government-owned or Government-provided facilities;
- look for opportunities to reduce costs when selecting locations and facilities available at lower rates (e.g. lower rates during off season);
- validate the necessity for recurring conferences;
- establish appropriate management oversight and internal processes to ensure the integrity of the conference planning and conference execution process; and
- maintain written documentation of the alternatives considered and the selection rationale used.

Q2. What is a conference?

A2. A conference is a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel. A conference is generally organized for the purpose of facilitating a discussion or exchange of views on matters related to the

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Attachment 7

Submitting an Exemption Request

Conference Title:

Dates:

Location:

Website:

Registration Fees:

Proposed Travel Fees:

Purpose:

Number traveling:

Exemption being applied (A: Meeting to carry out oversight, B: Internal agency business, C: International cooperation, D: Federal training, E: Certification training, F: Board or Peer Review Meeting), See expansion of Exemption List on T:Drive//Conferences:

Justification of Exemption (Please add event details, don't use abbreviations, state if event has been exempt in prior years & prior exemptions applied):

****Should the traveler attend more than one meeting during a trip – please note that the exemptions are meeting specific and any additional meetings/conferences would need to be identified.****